

>hassle of data entry.

Why should we pay VECs more? They already enter data electronically, so they can sell their "recent amateurs who have upgraded" lists to HRO and AES so I can receive yet-another "congratulations on your upgrade!" letter and catalog.

MD

Date: 16 Jul 1993 22:32:11 GMT
From: swrinde!cs.utexas.edu!usc!news.aero.org!Aero.org!obrien@network.UCSD.EDU
Subject: Callsign reissue on FCC's steam driven computer
To: ham-policy@ucsd.edu

In article <22613eINNatt@west.West.Sun.COM>, flloyd@l1-a.west.sun.com (Fred Lloyd [Phoenix SE]) writes:

|> ...
|> I'm sure that many of us would gladly help pay for a new FCC computer
|> to help defray these costs. \$20 per license application would easily
|> foot the bill for a nice 486DX2 66mhz with a 500 MB drive and 8
|> megabytes of RAM. A nice unix workstation could run circles around
|> the Burroughs for about \$10,000.
|>
|> It isn't going to happen, however, because they use this same steam-
|> driven monolith for their commercial licenses, as well as all other
|> frequency allocation databases. Yes, it's big, probably on the
|> order of 5 to 10 gigabytes total.
|>
|> What's more likely to happen is that they eventually throw up their
|> arms and hand out all amateur radio matters to another body, perhaps
|> the VEC system or the ARRL. They've already demonstrated that amateur
|> radio is a net burden to them and that their number one priority is
|> cutting their costs and responsibilities, not expanding them.
|> ...

Ok, let's see if this changes the picture:

A few weeks ago, the VEC council met, with representatives from 12 of the VECs, as well as the FCC. At that meeting, the FCC announced a complete revamping of the whole license-issuing procedure. Beta-testing will start in October, with full operation expected by the first of the year.

610 forms, after a complete revamping, will be submitted electronically. This will get rid of the greatest factor in the current

licensing delay, which is keystroke entry of the 610 form information. The wait between sitting the exam and receiving the license in the mail is expected to average 5-6 days.

Because this time is so short, the FCC will also institute "instant callsigns". Unlicensed people who pass enough elements to get any class of license will be assigned a temporary callsign by the VEs at the testing session and may go on the air immediately. These temporary callsigns will be of the form WZ{district #}{3 initials}, so that mine, for example, would be WZ6MT0. Since these callsigns are expected to be used for less than a week, duplicates will be allowed.

This will be accompanied by a completely new software system to handle the license database. Currently, "Tech plus" licensees receive "Technician" licenses indistinguishable from those granted to "codeless Techs". The reason for this is that the licensing database does not have provision for more than five classes of license. With the installation of the new software, "Tech plus" licensees will receive a separate class of license. It is possible that the FCC will retroactively issue "Tech plus" licenses to all current Tech plus license holders. Whether or not they do this, the VEC database will be retired when it is no longer needed, either through license expiration or retroactive licensing.

The source for this information is the head of the GLARG VEC, as reported at the recent meeting of the Los Angeles Area Council of Amateur Radio Clubs.

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Mike O'Brien
obrien@aero.org

Date: Fri, 16 Jul 1993 18:00:50 GMT
From: dog.ee.lbl.gov!overload.lbl.gov!agate!howland.reston.ans.net!
europa.eng.gtefsd.com!darwin.sura.net!rsg1.er.usgs.gov!dgg.cr.usgs.gov!
bodoh@network.UCSD.EDU
Subject: Callsign reissue on FCC's steam driven computer
To: ham-policy@ucsd.edu

In article <226l3eINNatt@west.West.Sun.COM>, flloyd@l1-a.west.sun.com (Fred Lloyd [Phoenix SE]) writes:

|>...
|> A few months back when I purchased their database, I received a sheet
|> from their computer department which detailed the database format
|> along with the type of system and per-minute charges.
|>
|> So the story goes something like this:
|>

|> First, the system is a Burroughs something-or-other. The database
|> records were stored in 300 byte fixed length (EBCDIC) records, fully two
|> thirds of which was completely blank. Secondly, the inter-agency
|> charge between the NTIS and the FCC was \$530 to make the TWO half
|> inch/9track 6250BPI tapes, which worked out to about \$15 per MINUTE
|> according to the amount of CPU time used. Bear in mind that the
|> total amount of data we're talking about here is about 55 Megabytes.
|> The end price for the tapes, delivered to me from the NTIS was \$720.
|>
|> Yes, a great many of us reading this could do a better job of amateur
|> callsign database management on a PC for less money than they pay for
|> maintenance on the big Burroughs, saving them a bundle. Meanwhile,
|> however, the government is preparing to raise our taxes to help pay for
|> this steaming heap of 1960's technology, along with a trillion other
|> pork barrel expenditures.
|>...
|> It isn't going to happen, however, because they use this same steam-
|> driven monolith for their commercial licenses, as well as all other
|> frequency allocation databases. Yes, it's big, probably on the
|> order of 5 to 10 gigabytes total.
|>...
|> What we should do as a community is offer to help them, approaching
|> any problem from the standpoint of reducing their workload. If we can
|> demonstrate that some other method would cost them nothing, reduce their
|> workload and make them more productive, they might just bite.
|>
|> [Fred Lloyd, AA7BQ Fred.Lloyd@west.sun.com]

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I am by no means a Burroughs fan, but don't assume that a 486 could replace a mainframe. Yes, the 486 will beat SOME mainframes in compute power - but the strongpoint of most mainframes is their high data throughput and ability to serve hundreds or thousands of users. Certainly many UNIX servers will kick the crap out of most mainframes, but a 486 won't. They are probably tied to their dinosaur by millions of lines of code and budget constraints which prevent them from porting the code. Actually we can't assume that they aren't aware of the problem or aren't doing something about it. Like most government agencies, they are likely in the process of upgrading to new technology, but that take time and money.

Yes - you are right in saying that something should be done to help them. The idea of charging for licenses is a good one - I would gladly pay for my license if I knew that the money was defraying their cost of licensing and enforcing. They really need to do more enforcing and fining and less tedious paperwork.

One possible method to decrease their workload is requiring the VEC's to submit license applications in batches, electronically. This would save the FCC the

hassle of data entry. The testing fee could be raised to defray the cost to the VEC of doing the data entry. The VEC would also be given blocks of callsigns to issue so that at the time they notify the FCC of the new applicant and their callsign, they can fire off a letter to the applicant. I suppose the VEC could even print the license form.

BTW - I see a lot of mud slinging on the net aimed at the FCC. Does anyone at the FCC monitor these groups? Are they prohibited from responding publicly lest their statements be construed as an official? You would think that they would want to defend themselves somewhat though...

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+++++
+ Tom Bodoh - Sr. systems software engineer, Hughes STX, N0X?? (in the mail) +
+ USGS/EROS Data Center, Sioux Falls, SD, USA 57198 (605) 594-6830 +
+ Internet; bodoh@dgg.cr.usgs.gov (152.61.192.66)
+
+ "Welcome back my friends to the show that never ends!" EL&P
+
+++++
```

Date: 16 Jul 1993 18:24:25 GMT
From: korie1!west.West.Sun.COM!11-a!flloyd@ames.arpa
Subject: Callsign reissue on FCC's steam driven computer
To: ham-policy@ucsd.edu

In article <1993Jul16.180050.309@rsg1.er.usgs.gov>
bodoh@dgg.cr.usgs.gov (Tom Bodoh) writes:
>--

>I am by no means a Burroughs fan, but don't assume that a 486 could replace a
>mainframe. Yes, the 486 will beat SOME mainframes in compute power - but
>the strongpoint of most mainframes is their high data throughput and ability
>to serve hundreds or thousands of users. Certainly many UNIX servers will
>kick the crap out of most mainframes, but a 486 won't.

Agreed. But a 486 could easily take on the single task of managing the amateur radio callsign database. It's called downsizing, distributed computing,... oh well, forget it. We're talking about the government here :-)

-fred

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| [Fred Lloyd, AA7BQ | Fred.Lloyd@west.sun.com] |
| [Sun Microsystems, | Systems Engineer] |
| [Phoenix, AZ | (602) 224-3517] |

Date: 16 Jul 93 22:52:56 GMT
From: korie!west.West.Sun.COM!l1-a!flloyd@RUTGERS.EDU
Subject: Callsign reissue on FCC's steam driven computer
To: ham-policy@ucsd.edu

In article <227a9b\$r9v@news.aero.org> obrien@Aero.org (Michael O'Brien) writes:

>
> A few weeks ago, the VEC council met, with representatives from
>12 of the VECs, as well as the FCC. At that meeting, the FCC announced
>a complete revamping of the whole license-issuing procedure. Beta-testing
>will start in October, with full operation expected by the first of the
>year.
>....
>
> This will be accompanied by a completely new software system to
>handle the license database. Currently, "Tech plus" licensees receive
>"Technician" licenses indistinguishable from those granted to "codeless
>Techs". The reason for this is that the licensing database does not
>have provision for more than five classes of license. With the installation
>of the new software, "Tech plus" licensees will receive a separate class
>of license.
>

Outstanding! Now: does this mean that the reissue of old callsigns will
again be possible?

-fred

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| [Fred Lloyd, AA7BQ | Fred.Lloyd@west.sun.com] |
| [Sun Microsystems, | Systems Engineer] |
| [Phoenix, AZ | (602) 224-3517] |

Date: Fri, 16 Jul 1993 22:22:30 GMT
From: swrinde!cs.utexas.edu!uwm.edu!ux1.cso.uiuc.edu!moe.ksu.ksu.edu!
crcnis1.unl.edu!news.unomaha.edu!cwis!pschleck@network.UCSD.EDU
Subject: Callsign reissue on FCC's steam driven computer
To: ham-policy@ucsd.edu

In <CA9su2.n3H@eis.calstate.edu> jherndo@eis.calstate.edu (John Herndon) writes:

>Maybe if all the hams would pay a annual licensing fee we could get a
>little more attention from the FCC.. Or enable them to hire one or two
>individuals with a nice multiprocessor system to churn out ham signs only.

>
> -----
> [> John W. Herndon - INTERNET: jherndo@eis.calstate.edu <]
> -----

Others have expressed the same sentiment, but since it's easier to follow up to one article, I'll pick on John for a while. :-)

The reason that the FCC lost the ability to collect licensing fees (an early 70's court decision?) was because the fees had no correlation with services provided. It all went into the giant Treasury hopper and was doled out with other revenues by Congress. As a matter of fact, licensing fees went up as actual funding of the FCC went *down*.

As many historians and philosophers studying the development of bureaucracies know, they evolve into enormous black holes taking in more and more funds in the front end, and providing less and less services on the back end. Consider that we spend more per-pupil on education than any other country on earth. Consider that in Congress, one's seniority and whether or not a program is located in one's state can play a much bigger role in allocating funds for it than actual merit.

Without specialized legislation to direct those licensing fees into a special fund (a big deal legally, and not likely to happen in the near future), we would have our pockets emptied for the licensing fee, then get in line to get those funds back (from a Congress that has other priorities). In this context, a licensing fee is no better than a regressive tax (and out of proportion to our impact on the FCC budget, which is estimated at \$1 or \$2 per license application for 1.5 assigned data entry personnel, and minimal regulatory and enforcement duties)

Just say no to a new broad-based contribution tax!

73, Paul W. Schleck, KD3FU

pschleck@unomaha.edu

Date: Fri, 16 Jul 1993 18:32:26 GMT
From: dog.ee.lbl.gov!overload.lbl.gov!agate!howland.reston.ans.net!usc!
nic.csu.net!eis.CalState.EDU!jherndo@network.UCSD.EDU
Subject: Callsign reissue on FCC's steam driven computer
To: ham-policy@ucsd.edu

Maybe if all the hams would pay a annual licensing fee we could get a little more attention from the FCC.. Or enable them to hire one or two individuals with a nice multiprocessor system to churn out ham signs only.

[> John W. Herndon - INTERNET: jherndo@eis.calstate.edu <]

Date: 17 Jul 93 05:29:13 GMT
From: ogicse!uwm.edu!ux1.cso.uiuc.edu!newsrelay.iastate.edu!news.iastate.edu!
trempllo.gis.iastate.edu!willmore@network.UCSD.EDU
Subject: Callsign reissue on FCC's steam driven computer
To: ham-policy@ucsd.edu

levy@levy.fnal.gov (Mark E. Levy, ext. 8056) writes:
>flloyd@l11-a.west.sun.com (Fred Lloyd [Phoenix SE]) writes:
>[stuff deleted]

>> I'm sure that many of us would gladly help pay for a new FCC computer
>> to help defray these costs. \$20 per license application would easily
>> foot the bill for a nice 486DX2 66mhz with a 500 MB drive and 8
>> megabytes of RAM. A nice unix workstation could run circles around
>> the Burroughs for about \$10,000.

>You don't have enough facts to be making recommendations.

>While your proposal may very well handle the database, you're completely
>ignoring many other aspects of why a large system might be used.

And you're ignoring that the proposal was also limiting what the system
was to handle. The original system handles much more than the amateur
call allocation. To replace that part of the original system, a much
smaller/faster machine would work just fine.

>If such a database were put on a PC, only *one* person at a time could maintain
>it. Even if a network were used, the number of simultaneous accesses is fairly
>small. That computer is probably used for many other things as well, and
>probably has nationwide, if not worldwide access. You can't do that with a PC.

What? One user PC? Have you never heard of Unix? Just because it runs on
a pc, that doesn't make it a DOS application.

>PCs are *NOT* the answer to everything. In fact, they're not the answer to most
>things. There are things they're good at; I don't think the FCC callsign
>database is one of them.

You're right, there are some things that PC's aren't good at. Also, the
converse is true. There are some things that PC's are better at. The original
poster also said that a good workstation could be used. I'd put an Alpha AXP
3000/300 up against that burroughs for this job any day.

Where can I get a copy of the license info? I'll take a swing at this project. We've got some disk space laying around and a DecStation 5000/240 should eat up something this small.

Later,
David

--

willmore@iastate.edu | "Death before dishonor" | "Better dead than greek" |
David Willmore | "Ever noticed how much they look like orchids? Lovely!" |

Date: Fri, 16 Jul 93 20:58:32 GMT
From: mnemosyne.cs.du.edu!nyx!jmaynard@uunet.uu.net
Subject: Call sign snobbery
To: ham-policy@ucsd.edu

In article <1737@arrl.org> jkearman.org (Jim Kearman) writes:
>In the 70s, eligible hams could buy 1 X 2 calls starting with
>W or K, and later N. That's where most of today's 1 X 2 calls
>come from. [...] There was also a prestige value. If
>you had one, you'd been a ham for a while and had an Extra
>Class license for a while.

I got this call in 1977; I'd been continuously licensed for about two years and an Extra for four months when I got it. Still, there were a few folks out there who had a hard time dealing with a 17-year-old with a 1x2...

>Starting in the late 50s, when the original batch of 1 X 3 W/K
>calls ran out, FCC began issuing 2 X 3 calls, starting with WA,
>then going to WB. They skipped WC for amateur calls, then started
>issuing WD calls.

Actually, I understand a very few WC calls were issued to regular hams when they first started this, but all of those were quickly replaced with WDs...seems they had a computer problem. :-) There were some WC calls issued to RACES stations, and a very, very few of them were issued to RACES repeaters as WC#Rxx.

The rumor I remember was that folks objected to having their call start with the abbreviation for "water closet"...

>When all the 1 X 2s were issued (to Extras) in a district, FCC
>began issuing 2 X 1 calls. I believe the separate calls for

>license class system started about the same time.

The FCC started issuing 2x1s at the same time they did the rest of the current call system. They actually ran out of the 1x2 in the 4th and 6th districts; hams in those areas could get AA#xx calls once the 1x2s ran out. Not all AA#xx calls are recent. (Right, Roy?)

>Back when everyone had a real suffix, it was common to refer
>to someone by his or her suffix: "LZedN said EDW bought a new
>receiver last week." You also didn't need a two-acre dupe
>sheet for Sweepstakes in those days, either, but that's for
>another day.

...or a computer...

Some folks still use just the suffix. I never got into that habit, although others on the system I hang out on do that. It's interesting to listen to them try to deal with 2x1s, though...

Oh, and BTW...WB3I, what was the rest of that call? :-) :-)

--

Jay Maynard, EMT-P, K5ZC, PP-ASEL | Never ascribe to malice that which can
jmaynard@oac.hsc.uth.tmc.edu | adequately be explained by stupidity.
"iHaTeX." -- Andrew Burt

Date: 16 Jul 93 14:03:37 EDT
From: pacbell.com!iggy.GW.Vitalink.COM!wetware!spunky.RedBrick.COM!psinntp!
psinntp!arrl.org@network.UCSD.EDU
Subject: Dana's generalizations (was Re: Lost petition for VHF/UHF beams)
To: ham-policy@ucsd.edu

In rec.radio.amateur.policy, system@garlic.sbs.com (Tony Pelliccio) writes:

>It's already happening. But what makes you think the ARRL is anti
>no-code? That's far from the truth. They love the no-code license.

In case I wasn't clear about this, I do NOT speak for ARRL policy in anything except technical matters. Having said that, here is my personal opinion:

As well we should! Our members, and us, went through some vacillation over the whole issue, and many in the Amateur community are clearly still divided, but in the long run the FCC has created this new class of license and it is up to all of us to either welcome these new hams (with or without code) into the hobby or allow Amateur Radio to become divided into two (or more) camps. I do not think that

supporting a new, major part of Amateur Radio is the wrong thing to do.

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>I don't necessarily have anything against codeless techs but I do object
>to the way it was handled.
```

In what way? Now that I have stuck my neck this far into the noose, I would love to respond, but I would find it difficult to reconstruct the entire mess since the early 80s, so would prefer to know what you think was done improperly.

73 from ARRL HQ, Ed

Ed Hare, KA1CV
American Radio Relay League
225 Main St.
Newington, CT 06111
(203) 666-1541 - voice
ARRL Laboratory Supervisor
RFI, xmtr and rcvr testing

ehare@arrl.org

"The goal of every engineer is to retire without getting blamed for a major catastrophe." -- Scott Adams and Dilbert

— — — — —

Date: 17 Jul 93 04:33:34 GMT
From: ogicse!uwm.edu!cs.utexas.edu!sdd.hp.com!portal!ttolh@network.UCSD.EDU
Subject: Dana's generalizations (was Re: Lost petition for VHF/UHF beams)
To: ham-policy@ucsd.edu

In rec.radio.amateur.policy, system@garlic.sbs.com (Tony Pelliccio) writes:
>I don't necessarily have anything against codeless techs but I do object
>to the way it was handled.

Oh, you don't like the way it was handled, do you? And what did you do personally? Did you submit comments to the FCC, or did you sit on your hands and complain about how others handled the situation?

If you didn't bother to participate when it mattered, it's a little late in the game to whine about how the game was played.

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Todd Tolhurst, WA1M    \\
Waterbury, CT         \\    "I'm from the Government and I'm here to help!"
ttolh@shell.portal.com \\
```

Date: Fri, 16 Jul 1993 19:23:48 GMT

From: sdd.hp.com!col.hp.com!news.dtc.hp.com!srngenprp!alanb@decwrl.dec.com
Subject: lotsadots
To: ham-policy@ucsd.edu

Derek Wills (oo7@emx.cc.utexas.edu) wrote:
: n9ljx@en.ecn.purdue.edu (Scott A Stambaugh N9LJX) asks:

: >In article <CA8ACv.D0G@fc.hp.com> perry@fc.hp.com (Perry Scott) writes:
: >>
: >>A few weeks ago, I heard god on 40m CW: N5EE. It went by so fast, I
: >>was still waiting to copy. Almost makes me want to move to Texas - NOT!

: >Anybody remember the call that has been popping up lately..EI5SH or something
: >to that effect?

: In Oct 92 I worked EI5HE, could this be it? I managed to end the
: QSO by sending best wISHES HI EI5HE aa5bt, giving 32 dots in a row -
: it was to good to miss. OK, 33 if you count the first bit of A.

My favorite "dit" call was WB5EEE -- used to be active in the contests --
also know as "WB5S".

Back around 1970, one of the operators at W1AW was WA9HHH. On CW, it
sounded like his call was a mistake...

Another favorite ARRL staffer call from the '70s was WA7SCE. Also
known as "WA7 <SK> E E". (Sounded like signing off the air.)

AL N1AL

End of Ham-Policy Digest V93 #236
